Got a bone to pick? Send your ideas to: "Your Turn," *The Independent,* 121 E. Pikes Peak Ave., Suite. 455, Colorado Springs, CO 80903 or e-mail us at CompuServe 71632,126. Please limit your musings to 600 words or less, or be prepared for some pretty severe editing. Include a head shot (that's a photo of yourself). Your opinions are our business.

Guest Editorial by J. Gregory Walta

Time for Healing, Not Cultural War

For more than four years, Colorado Springs has been at the center of a cultural war over gay rights. In the last year, we have had some respite while the United States Supreme Court has deliberated over whether Amendment Two is constitutional. That brief respite will come to an abrupt end within weeks when the Supreme Court announces its decision.

Will we see a resumption of the gay rights war in Colorado Springs in the coming weeks? Let's hope not. That war opened wounds and created scars in this community that are only now beginning to heal. We are beginning to focus on long-neglected issues like human relations, community goals, school reform, youth violence and others. These issues should not again be overshadowed by the issue of homosexuality just when they are beginning to draw our attention.

It appears that Will Perkins and Colorado for Family Values are poised to leap back onto center stage with a new form of anti-gay initiative. At the same time, Denver gay activists have announced an effort to place a same-sex marriage law on the ballot. In the midst of this, Ground Zero, the local gay-rights group, has called for a moratorium on all gay initiatives and legislation to give the community a chance to heal. This is an act of statesmanship which is supported by Citizens Project, the Human Relations Coalition and other responsible groups. It deserves support from all of us.

I call upon Colorado for Family Values to join this moratorium. I also urge Ground Zero and Colorado for Family Values to join forces to defeat any gay-related initiative proposed by groups outside of Colorado Springs during the moratorium. Quite simply, it is time for this town to restore civility to local public discourse and to turn our attention to other important issues.

It would be refreshing to see Colorado Springs recognized across the country as a peacemaker rather than a troublemaker. How about it, Will?

J. Gregory Walta is a Colorado Springs attorney, a member of the newly formed Pikes Peak Human Relations Coalition and a

THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO KEEP TRYING! AFTER ALL, YOU'RE AT LEAST AS LIKELY TO FIND TRUE LOVE AND HAPPINESS AS TO, SAY, GET HIT BY LIGHTNING WHILE ICE SKATING IN THE NUDE AT ROCKEFELLER CENTER...
KRAAK!
KER-POW!

Opinion

Strange Bedfellows

PALO ALTO, Calif. — You could say that politics makes strange bedfellows, but bedfellows is probably not the best word to use considering the subject. The subject is sex, teen-age pregnancy, welfare — a trio of issues that have morphed into public enemy number one. An enemy with a face that is young and female.

In the past, politicians outdid each other in their praise of motherhood. Today they outdo each other in laments about teen-age motherhood. From the feminist left to the religious right, they have found common ground worrying and sermonizing over girls who become mothers before they become women.

Now at last, the same disparate collection of policy-makers are turning their attention to the partners in this terrible tango: adult men.

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In California, which has the highest rate of teen-age pregnancy in the country, Pete Wilson, a governor who tacks from right to center with impressive sailing skills, has issued a warning to adult men who impregnate underage girls. In his state of the state address last month, he told these men, "I have this message: That's not just wrong, not just a shame. It's a crime, a crime called statutory rape."

In fact, it's a crime called "unlawful sex with a minor" in the gender-neutral terminology of the penal code. But Wilson has allotted $150,000 to each of 16 counties to go after men who go after girls. It's an idea whose time has come back. And not just in California.

The renewed interest in statutory rape laws comes out of startling research showing that the babies of teen-age moms don't necessarily have teen-age dads. Half the babies born to mothers between 15 and 17 had fathers who were over 20.

Remember the 14-year-old girl who had a baby in Texas last week and her 22-year-old "boyfriend"? Across the country, 20 percent of the fathers are six or more years older than the mothers. The younger the girl, the greater the age difference. In Washington state, the average age of men who impregnated girls between 12 and 17